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ABSTRACT

A coordinated 24-hour (school/residential) plan for determining service for severely and profoundly handicapped students is described. It is explained that the following service concepts are to be considered: whole person planning; integrated/cooperative planning: minimum interruption of the rhythm of existing activities, cost effective delivery at lowest possible level of sophistication; and least restrictive environment. Discussed is a recommended procedure (based on current performance of skills required in the current environment) requiring the following steps: determine existing daily schedule; determine current level of performance; identify alternative reactions to "absent prerequisite components"; identify objectives affecting many skills/activities; determine support skills; allocate activity times and specific objectives; and identify support elements and equipment. (BD)

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Developing Twenty Four Hour Service Plans for Severely Handicapped Learners

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November 1976

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DEVELOPING TWENTY FOUR HOUR SERVICE PLANS FOR SEVERELY HANDICAPPED LEARNERS

Fundamental to the principle of equal opportunity for life options is the requirement that all individuals participate in an educational system responsive to individual differences. The provision of relevant educational opportunities requires an educational system with the flexibility to respond to individual capabilities and individual needs. An educational system operating in such a manner maximizes each person's potential with regard to career and life style. Unfortunately, children requiring special education services traditionally have completed their formal education without acquiring the basic skills necessary for self-determined participation in the career/life style alternatives available to others in our society.

Despite the wide range of needs and learning styles displayed by these "exceptional" children, the educational system serving them usually has been deficient in program variety, intensity, content, or technique. In order to provide all children with a meaningful education, public schools must reposture themselves to accomodate the differences in children. The severity or scope of these differences should in no way interfere with the delivery of necessary services.

As a result of previous policies, Public Law 94-142 (Education of All the Handicapped Act) will require many SEAs and LEAs to make radical revisions in their educational service delivery capabilities and procedures. Two of the more controversial aspects of the law (probably because of the amount of change they require) are developing individualized educational plans and

providing services to severely handicapped learners. Some critics of the law contend that one is an outgrowth of the other; specifically, because performance based IEPs only are useful for severely handicapped learners working on extremely basic motor, ADL, or pre-cognitive skills, whose behavior changes little from year to year, who are capable of learning only simple behavior chains, and for whom behavior modification is the most appropriate instructional tactic.

This view represents a significant lack of awareness about both the IEPs and severely handicapped learners. Developing IEPs for severely handicapped learners is a complex, time consuming and potentially anxiety provoking activity. This is because the difficulty in developing IEPs lies not in the delineation of expected outcomes, (that issue is more philosophical than practical); rather it lies in the process os selecting appropriate objectives, service deliverers, and service locations.

The development of IEPs for severely handicapped students is complicated because educational and life activities are often the same. Frequently, it is impossible to clearly define educational activities. For the severely handicapped, more than any other population, John Dewey's statement that "education is not preparation for life, education is life itself" is true. For appropriate and sufficient services to exist, program planners will have to move beyond the artificial limitations imposed by a traditional education approach to a concept of total planning which demonstrates an understanding of the critical relationship between education and other life activities. One way of coping with the multi-faceted complexities of IEP development involves the implementation of a simple systems approach.

Determining Service Needs

The Team responsible for determining services for severely and profoundly handicapped learners should establish a detailed planning process for the development of a coordinated twenty-four hour (school/residential) plan which includes objectives, service deliverers, etc. As the Team identifies the details of the plan, it also must consider carefully five fundamental service concepts:

* whole person planning - specific objectives and activities must be established which relate to the learner's overall physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development.

* integrated/cooperative planning - all those involved with the learner's training should be involved in the planning process. A cooperative relationship should be established between the school and residence.

* minimum interruption of the rhythm of existing activities - learners whose objectives or placements require major modifications of existing schedules or procedures often have to confront hostile staff attitudes.

* cost effective delivery at the lowest possible level of sophistication - resources must be allocated by realizing that para-professionals can make major contributions toward the attainment of various objectives.

* least restrictive environment - all services should be provided in the environment which is closest to that of peers and which can support the learner's current skill development efforts.

The emphasis of educational activities should be on assisting the learner to cope successfully with the out-of-school environment. Helping the learner better function in the existing environment may be the best preparation for possible changes in the social/political climate (more group homes, foster care, sheltered workshops, etc.) that will increase available life options. Thus, the recommended procedure is one based on current performance of skills

required in the current environment. The procedure recommended to pinpoint the information required entails the following steps:

1. identify needs
   a. determine existing daily schedule
   b. determine current level of performance

2. develop service plan objectives and services
   a. identify alternative reactions to "absent prerequisite components"
   b. identify objectives affecting many skills/activities
   c. determine support skills
   d. allocate activity times and specific objectives
   e. identify support elements and equipment

Identify Needs

Determine existing daily schedule: The Team's first task is to determine the learner's current daily schedule. This involves listing general daily activities, e.g., getting up, eating breakfast, dressing, etc., and the approximate times they occur. Next, the specific skills which make up each general activity should be itemized, e.g., morning dressing consists of taking off pajamas, putting on shirt/pants, etc. The Team also should indicate activities which occur sporadically throughout the week as well as those which occur daily. Any time period longer than fifteen minutes where the learner is not engaged in a planned activity should be indicated in the "general activities" column as "activity time" ("specific skills" should be temporarily left blank). The above information should be recorded on a Daily Schedule Worksheet (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

After the specific skills are listed, the Team should complete the "days of the week" section of the worksheet by indicating on which days which skills are required (Figure 1). After developing the schedule, the Team should examine it to determine what changes, if any, are necessary to:

* normalize life styles (e.g., extend bedtime from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.)
* provide a more rational use of time (e.g., if possible, all bathroom activities take place in the same time block)
* add essential life skills to the schedule (e.g., allocate recreation time)

Schedule changes should be kept to a minimum and the rationale for any changes should be detailed in a narrative accompanying the completed service plan so that everyone involved in its implementation understands the rationale for the changes.

Determine current level of performance: The Team must determine how well the learner currently performs the indicated skills. This information should be obtained by an assessment of the learner's current levels of functioning. The assessment information should be collected through observation or from reports of those who know the learner. The assessment information must be detailed indicating any apparent causative factors (i.e., limited range of motion in right arm, insufficient strength of fingers in left hand, etc.). The Team must arrange for assessments and/or staff/parent interviews to be conducted.

The Team should indicate the level of performance in the "current performance" section of the Daily Schedule Worksheet (Figure 1). If the learner can complete the skill upon request and without adult assistance, an "I" (for

independent) should be placed in the box. If assistance is required, the degree of assistance (TP - total physical, PP - partial physical, V - verbal) and size of the recommended training group (I - individual, S - small group) should be indicated. The Team also should detail the "absent prerequisite components" that the learner must acquire to perform the skill.

Develop Service Plan Objectives and Services

Using the information listed on the Daily Schedule Worksheet and any supplemental assessment data, the Team can begin developing an integrated service delivery plan. The Planning Worksheet (Figure 2) allows the Team to list specific information about each objective. The information will enable the Team to determine exactly the kind and quality of resources which will be needed to implement the plan (e.g., 15 hours per week of teacher time, 2 hours per week of speech therapist time, etc.).

FIGURE 2

Identify alternative reactions to "absent prerequisite components": The "absent prerequisite components" listed on the Daily Schedule Worksheet present a list of potential plan objectives. The Team must determine how to remediate these indicated performance deficiences. Figure 3 indicates possible alternative actions.

FIGURE 3

The Team first should determine if the absent components can be made possible by modifying the physical and/or behavioral environment. Possible actions include removing physical obstacles (widening toilet stalls), providing assisting devices (hand bars), prescribing prosthetic devices (dorsal feeding splints), or modifying the inherent consequences of the environment (eliminating punishment, arranging positive consequences, etc.).

If environmental modification is not sufficient to enable the learner to demonstrate the skill, then it usually is necessary to determine an appropriate instructional intervention. To accomplish this, the Team should identify the level and type of assistance that likely will be necessary to obtain this objective, taking into consideration the learner's current level of performance and performance patterns.

The Team must determine the service provider for each skill. The service provider should be indicated by name and position. In some residential situations this may be a different person each day. In such cases, the Team should indicate who is responsible for ensuring service delivery, i.e. "aide assigned by A. Jones, Head Physical Therapist".

Next, the Team must determine the location where each service will be delivered. While conditions are not always ideal, the Team should be conscious of the need to teach skills in appropriate normalized settings (i.e., eating breakfast in a dining room not bedroom). If a significant percentage of tasks cannot be conducted in current settings and the environment cannot be modified, serious consideration should be given to moving the learner to a more appropriate setting. It is important to

remember that a learner's needs should determine the education/residential environment and not the reverse.

Identify objectives affecting multiple skills/activities: The Team should indicate on the worksheet any objectives that relate to multiple skills or objectives that will be worked on during time gaps in the day schedule. Items listed here may include:

- skills necessary to perform various other activities e.g., mobility.
- activities during short, frequent, unstructured time blocks (e.g., periods between various activities that might become dead time unless some general alternatives are established to apply to these situations).
- objectives that relate to the elimination of disruptive behaviors that interfere with the acquisition of other skills.

Determine support skills: The Team should list any objectives which, although not specific daily skills, are essential to support skill acquisition and maintenance. Skills considered here may include:

- sensory awareness
- perceptual accuracy
- spatial relations
- visual/auditory memory
- tactile discrimination
- sound imitation
- receptive language
- expressive language
- recreation (structured and free time)

Allocate activity time to objectives: The Team should designate "activity times" on the "Daily Schedule Worksheet" for training designed to assist the learner in acquiring the identified objectives. This allows the learner to work on specific components of the skill during training times while practicing

the complete skill as part of the daily schedule. Thus, classroom training activities have a concrete relationship to the learner's residential activities. The integration of residential requirements and classroom activities establishes the basis for a mutually beneficial relationship between the learner's two critical environments.

Identify support elements and equipment: The Team should state the support elements; environmental modification, staff inservice, and/or equipment, necessary for the learner to effectively acquire the desired skills. Examples of such statements are:

* the staff will receive fifteen minutes of inservice per week from a registered physical therapist who is either the learner's PT or has coordinated the inservice with the learner's PT.
* handbars on one bathroom commode
* adjustable swivel utensils

Alternative Uses of Services Plan Information

The completion of the Daily Schedule and Planning Worksheets provide the Team with a comprehensive picture of the learner's current level of performance and service requirements. This approach assists all involved in service delivery to see the inter-disciplinary coordination required to meet the severely or profoundly handicapped learner's needs. The Daily Schedule and Planning Worksheets also provide information that is necessary to meet various requirements of local, state and federal agencies. The information can supply teachers, PTs, etc. with operational statements for implementing instruction, while providing administrators with the basis for allocating personnel, material, and fiscal resources and for determining placement,

eligibility, etc. The information also can be used as the individualized educational plan documentation required by P.L. 94-142 and Title XIX.

Summary

Although it requires considerable amounts of time and effort, the process described above has many potential benefits for both learners and teachers. The process provides the information necessary to meet the program planning, implementation, and review requirements of P.L. 94-142, while at the same time, it encourages the development of the inter-disciplinary cooperation and coordination necessary to effectively serve this group of very special learners.

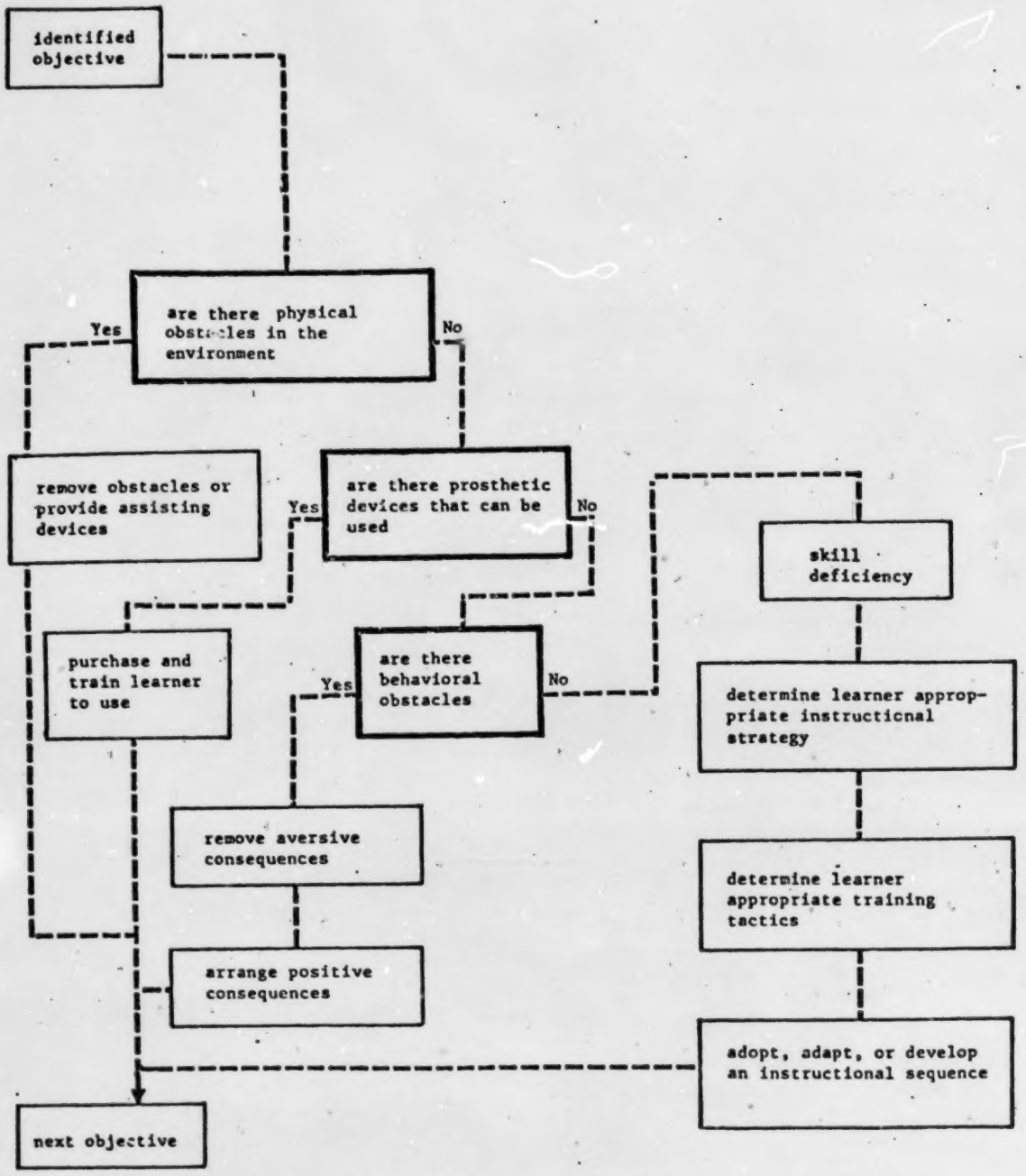

Figure 1. Alternative reactions to identified objectives.

Approx. Time	General Activities	Specific Skills	Days	Curr Perf.	Class Size	Absent Prerequisite Components
7:00	get up	transfer bed/WC	7	PP	I	limited motion (rt arm)
	wash	wash face	7	PP	I	insufficient finger strength
		wash hands	7	V	I	fails to replace towel
	dress	take off pajamas	7	I		
		put on pants	7	PP	I	can not button/zip
		put on socks	7	I		
		put on tie	Sun	PP	I	can not tie(finger strength)

Figure 2. Daily schedule worksheet.

Approx. Time	General Activities	Specific Skills	Days	Curr Perf.	Class Size	Absent Prerequisite Components
7:00	get up	transfer bed/WC	7	PP	I	limited motion (rt arm)
	wash	wash face	7	PP	I	insufficient finger strength
		wash hands	7	V	I	fails to replace towel
	dress	take off pajamas	7	I		
		put on pants	7	PP	I	can not button/zip
		put on socks	7	I		
		put on tie	Sun	PP	I	can not tie(finger strength)

Figure 2. Daily schedule worksheet.

Objective	Attainment 1	2	3	4	Deliverer / Location	Amount	Comments
will increase range of motion in rt. arm 20%	•	*			John Edwards PT / classroom	3 hours/wk	
will use napkin appropriately and without assistance	•	*			Susan Davis teacher / classroom	4 hours/wk	
zips appropriately and without assistance front one piece zipper	•	•	*		Susan Davis teacher / classroom	2 hours/wk	
places clothes on right side out wihout assistance		•	*		Susan Davis teacher / classroom	2 hours/wk	
puts on non-tie shoes approriately and without assistance		•	*		Susan Davis teacher / classroom	1 hour/wk	

Figure 3. Planning worksheet.